

relevant epidemiological concepts and indicates the pitfalls in the interpretation of observational data. (This is a particular problem with this topic, as a controlled trial of contraception is generally considered impracticable.)

The main review consists of three sections dealing with combined and progestogen-only contraceptives, and oestrogens used for non-contraceptive purposes. These sections are clearly laid out and incorporate a critical judgment of each reported study (emphasising the problems in the interpretation of the results). Some unpublished work is also reviewed, thus ensuring that the text is up to date.

There is a short section that deals with the relevance of present studies to developing countries; finally, a series of recommendations for further research are listed.

The report is short and easily read and its contents are absorbed in an evening; it is recommended to anyone wishing to gain an overview of steroid contraception carcinogenesis derived from the epidemiological literature.

M. R. ALDERSON

Technical Aids to Microbiology. By R. E. Trotman. (Pp. iv + 89; illustrated; £4.95.) London: Edward Arnold. 1978.

Although the microbiologist's mailbox is frequently filled with advertisements for various technological aids, little literature exists to help with their technical evaluation. Dr Trotman is uniquely placed to write on this topic, being a bio-engineer with a considerable experience of microbiology, and his monograph is the first available collected work on the subject.

The four sections describe the use of pipetting, dispensing, and inoculating devices for bacterial growth and inhibition tests, devices for enumerating bacteria, for distribution of chemically clean fluids, and for spreading cultures. The non-mechanically-minded will find the text suitably supplemented with some admirable illustrations.

The author's personality is firmly imprinted on the book. He restricts his descriptions to apparatus that he has tested (in some cases invented) or that he considers potentially useful; and he describes the relevant literature with personal comments attached. The scene that emerges is hopeful—a wide range of

instruments is available—but tinged with a little sadness since many do not work as well as might be hoped.

Dr Trotman's book contains an invaluable set of references and plenty of food for thought. It is concise and easy to read, and also so refreshingly cheap that it deserves to be on all laboratory bookshelves.

S. W. B. NEWSOM

Clinical, Biochemical and Haematological Reference Values in Normal Experimental Animals. By B. M. Mitruka and H. M. Rawnsley (Pp. xiv + 272; illustrated; £18.25.) Tunbridge Wells: Abacus Press. 1977.

This book attempts to summarise the available haematological and biochemical values in the commonly used laboratory animals; many new data are also included. A large section consists of tabulated values and these should prove to be a useful source of information.

The chapter dealing with materials and methods describes sampling techniques for the various laboratory species. Several of these are likely to lead to considerable stressing of the animal or are impractical or hazardous to the operator. For example, the method described for blood sampling cats is to wrap the animal in a towel and cut the ear or tail tip—no mention is made of cephalic vein venepuncture, which is a commonly used procedure. In the account of techniques for blood sampling monkeys, no warning is given of the potential microbiological hazards of handling simians or their tissues. Various haematological laboratory methods are also included, and the microscopic appearance of the blood cells in the various species is described, but there are no illustrations. The book, which has no index, closes with an extensive list of references.

Although there are more useful publications describing sampling methods and restraint of animals, the haematological and biochemical data alone make this a useful publication for reference.

P. A. FLECKNELL

Gynecologic Cytopathology: A Color Atlas of Differential Diagnosis. By Marie Luise Schneider and Hans-Joachim Staemmler. (Pp. xii + 187; illustrated; £24.50.) Eastbourne: Holt-Saunders. 1977.

This atlas beautifully illustrates the

cytological diagnosis of uterine carcinoma and related lesions. 'Endocrine cytology' is not included; not even the normal range of postmenopausal patterns is presented for comparison. There are no photographs of histological sections.

Cytological terms are not always chosen carefully, for instance the use of 'syncytium' for a cluster of cells with indistinct cell borders. In discussing supposedly precancerous states, there is the usual problem. Cells from cases of dysplasia are called 'dysplastic cells', while those from carcinoma in situ are 'atypical cells', 'immature cells', or 'cells of carcinoma in situ type'. This particular difficulty is not the fault of the authors and they wisely refrain from speaking of 'malignant cells' or 'carcinoma cells' in the absence of invasion.

This is not a textbook: its intention is to present colour photographs for teaching and for the clarification of differential diagnosis. This it achieves, but it is more expensive than some of its competitors.

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